

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

17. Jacob's years with Laban

An outline of the Book of Genesis *

* Approximate chapter divisions only

Genesis 1 to 11

Creation

Genesis 1 to 2

The Fall

Genesis 3

Before the Flood

Genesis 4 to 5

The Flood

Genesis 6 to 8

After the Flood

Genesis 9 to 11

Genesis 12 to 50

Abraham

Genesis 12 to 23

Isaac

Genesis 24 to 27

Jacob

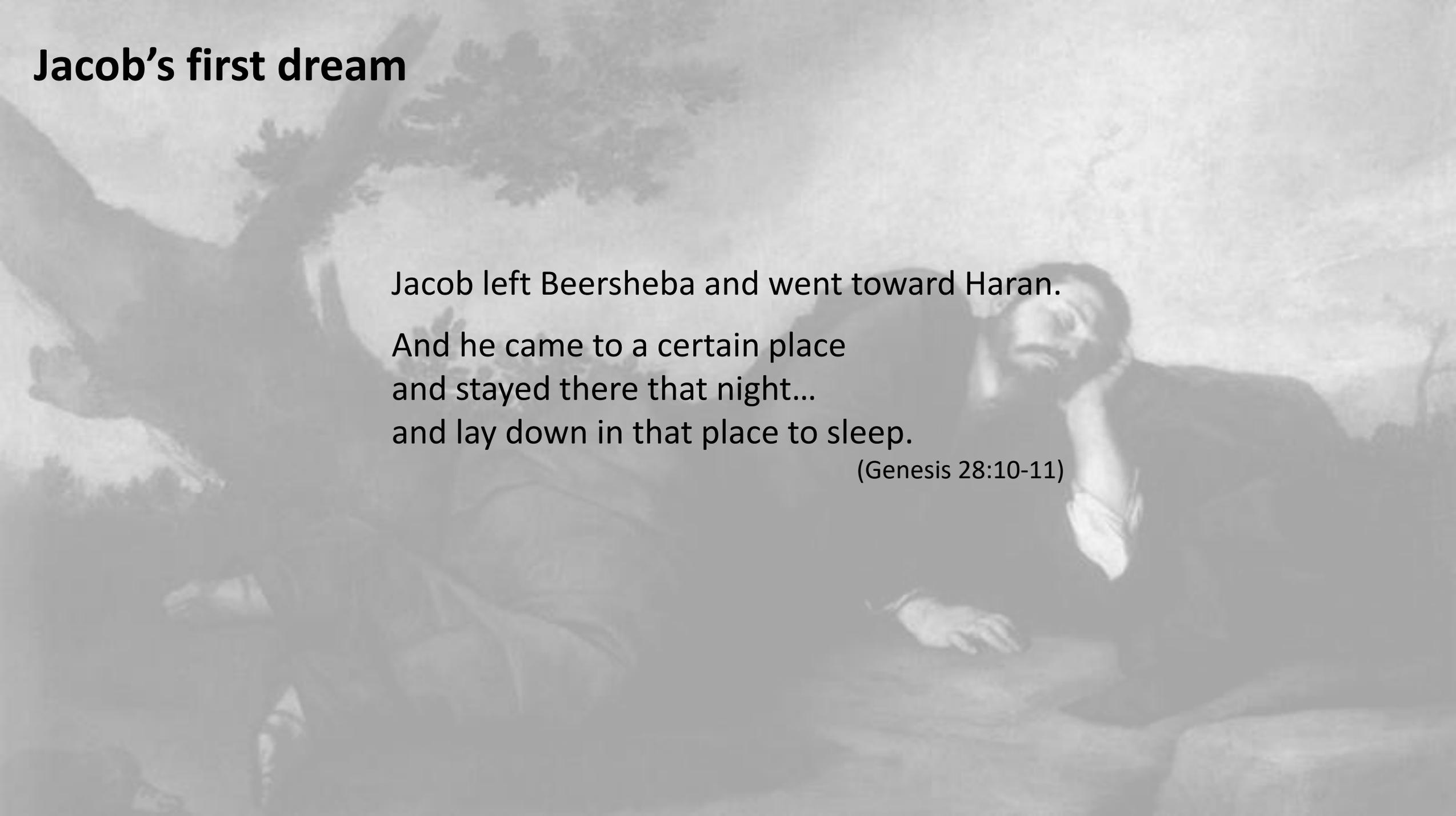
Genesis 28 to 36

Joseph

Genesis 37 to 50



Jacob's first dream



Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran.

And he came to a certain place
and stayed there that night...
and lay down in that place to sleep.

(Genesis 28:10-11)

Jacob's first dream

And he dreamed,
and behold,
there was a ladder set up on the earth,
and the top of it reached to heaven.
And behold,
the angels of God were
ascending and descending on it!
And behold,
the LORD stood above it and said...

(Genesis 28:12-13)

Jacob's first dream

"I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac.

① *"The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring.*

② *"Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth,
and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east
and to the north and to the south,
and in you and your offspring*

③ *shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

④ *"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go,
and will bring you back to this land.*

For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

(Genesis 28:13-15)

Jacob's vow

Then **Jacob made a vow**, saying,

“If God

- will be with me and
- will keep me in this way that I go, and
- will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,
- so that I come again to my father's house in peace,

then

- the LORD shall be my God, and
- this stone... shall be God's house.
- And of all that You give me I will give a full tenth to You.”

(Genesis 28:20-22)

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Jacob's 20 years with Laban

Genesis 29 to 30

- 
- Jacob's marriages
 - Jacob's children
 - Jacob's labours

Jacob's marriages

Scene 1 – By the well

Jacob is 77
years old

How different from
Abraham's servant
at another well!

Then Jacob went on his journey
and came to the land of the people of the east.
As he looked, he saw a well in the field,
and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it ...

“Behold, it is still high day.... Water the sheep....”

“We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together...

(Genesis 29:1-2, 7-8)

Jacob's marriages

Scene 1 – By the well

While he was still speaking with them,
Rachel came with her father's sheep....

Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel... and the sheep of Laban,
Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth
and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

How old
is Rachel?

Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.

And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman,
and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

(Genesis 29:9-12)

Jacob's marriages

Scene 2 – In Laban's home

Laban said to him,
"Surely you are my bone and my flesh!"
And he stayed with him a month....

"Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Now Laban had two daughters.
The name of the older was **Leah**,
and the name of the younger was **Rachel**. ...

**"I will serve you seven years
for your younger daughter Rachel."** ...

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel,
and they seemed to him but a few days
because of the love he had for her.

Jacob had
proven useful

Jacob had nothing
but his labour to give

(Genesis 29:14-20)

Jacob's marriages

Scene 3 – The wedding feast

Jacob is now
84 years old

Then Jacob said to Laban, “**Give me my wife...**”

So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast.

But **in the evening** he took his daughter **Leah** and brought her to Jacob...

And **in the morning**, behold, **it was Leah!**

(Genesis 29:21-25)

Jacob's marriages

Scene 3 – The wedding feast

And Jacob said to Laban,

“What is this you have done to me?
Did I not serve with you for Rachel?
Why then have you deceived me?”

The deceiver
tastes deception

The week of
marriage
celebration

Laban said,

“...Complete the week of this one,
and we will give you the other also
in return for serving me another 7 years.” ...

So Jacob ... loved Rachel more than Leah,
and served Laban for another 7 years.

(Genesis 29:25-30)

Marriage to sisters
was later forbidden.
(Leviticus 18:18)

Jacob's marriages

What can you see?

- Jacob has some real knowledge of God but he lives by his wits alone.
- Jacob is angry that he has been deceived - after he deceived his own father.
- Jacob's wives become bitter rivals, just as Jacob and Esau were rivals.
- Jacob's family suffered through favouritism - now Jacob favours Rachel over Leah.

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 - **Jacob's children**
 - Jacob's labours

Jacob's children

When the LORD saw that **Leah** was hated,
He opened her womb, but **Rachel** was barren.

God's heart for
the oppressed

And **Leah** conceived and bore a son – **Reuben**

“Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction;
for now my husband will love me.”

She conceived again - **Simeon**

“Because the LORD has heard that I am hated,
He has given me this son also.”

Again she conceived – **Levi**

“Now this time my husband will be attached to me,
because I have borne him three sons.”

And she conceived again - **Judah**

“This time I will praise the LORD.”

Then **Leah** ceased bearing.

(See Genesis 29:31-35)

Jacob's children

When **Rachel** saw that she bore Jacob no children...

“Give me children, or I shall die!”

“Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

“Here is my servant **Bilhah** ... that even I may have children through her.” ...

Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son - **Dan**.

Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.”

Bilhah conceived again - **Naphtali**.

Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.”

(See Genesis 30:1-8)

Did they not know about Hagar, and also Isaac's prayers?

Jacob's children

When **Leah** saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant **Zilpah** and gave her to Jacob as a wife.

Then **Zilpah** bore Jacob a son - **Gad**.

Leah said, "Good fortune has come!"

Zilpah bore Jacob a second son - **Asher**.

Leah said, "Happy am I!

For women have called me happy."

(See Genesis 30:9-13)

Jacob's children

In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah....

And God listened to **Leah**, and she conceived - **Issachar**.

“God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.”

And **Leah** conceived again - **Zebulun**,

“God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honour me, because I have borne him six sons.”

Afterward she bore a daughter - **Dinah**.

(See Genesis 30:14-21)



Jacob's children

Jacob is now
91 years old

Then God remembered **Rachel**,
and **God listened to her** and opened her womb.
She conceived and bore a son – **Joseph**
“God has taken away my reproach.
May the LORD add to me another son!”

(See Genesis 30:22-24)

Jacob's children

Leah	Zilpah	Rachel	Bilhah
Reuben	Gad	Joseph	Dan
Simeon	Asher		Naphtali
Levi			
Judah			
Issachar			
Zebulun			

These 11 children were born over the 7 years that Jacob served Laban for Rachel

Jacob's children

What can you see?

- God is forming the nation through which all the families of the earth shall be blessed as promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- He is doing this in a way no one would have predicted and with the most unlikely people.
- God is building His church...

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Jacob's 20 years with Laban

Genesis 29 to 30

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- Jacob's marriages
 - Jacob's children
 - **Jacob's labours**

Jacob's labours

Jacob has been
with Laban 14 years

As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph,
Jacob said to Laban,

**“Send me away, that I may go
to my own home and country.**

Give me my wives and my children
for whom I have served you....”

But Laban said to him,

“If I have found favor in your sight,
I have learned by divination that

the LORD has blessed me because of you.

“Name your wages, and I will give it.”

(Genesis 30:25-28)

Laban has
several gods

The covenant
with Abraham

Jacob's labours

“**What shall I give you?**” ...

“You shall not give me anything.

If you will do this for me,

I will again pasture your flock and keep it...

“**every speckled and spotted sheep
and every black lamb,
and the spotted and speckled among the goats...**
shall be my wages. ...”



These are
less common

Laban said, “**Good!** Let it be as you have said.”

(See Genesis 30:31-34)



Jacob's labours

But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in the charge of his sons.

And he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

(See Genesis 30:35-36)

To prevent these animals breeding with Jacob's flock



Jacob's labours



BUT GOD...

Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar
and almond and plane trees,
and peeled white streaks in them,
exposing the white of the sticks.

He set the sticks that he had peeled
in front of the flocks in the troughs,
that is, the watering places,
where the flocks came to drink.

(See Genesis 30:37-38)

I lifted up my eyes
and saw in a dream...
The Angel of God said to me...

“...I have seen all that Laban
is doing to you.

**“I am the God of Bethel,
where you anointed a pillar
and made a vow to me.” ...**

(See Genesis 31:10-13)

Jacob's labours

**“I am the God of Bethel,
where you anointed a pillar
and made a vow to me.”**



Thus the man increased greatly
and had large flocks,
female servants and male servants,
and camels and donkeys.

(Genesis 30:43)

Jacob's labours

What can you see?

- Jacob was blessed and increased through God's covenant with Abraham, not Jacob's schemes.
- Jacob came to appreciate that this blessing was unrelated to his schemes.
- God is ever faithful – we learn to be faithful to Him.

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

Oh **give thanks** to the LORD; call upon His name;
make known His deeds among the peoples!

Seek the LORD and His strength;
seek His presence continually!

Remember the wondrous works that He has done,
His miracles, and the judgments He uttered,

**O offspring of Abraham, His servant,
children of Jacob, His chosen ones!**

(Psalm 105:1, 4-6)